

## 37

## Describing people: appearance

### A Hair, face, skin and complexion



She's got straight hair and she's thin-faced (or she's got a thin face).



She's got long, wavy hair and she's round-faced (or she's got a round face).



She's got curly hair and is dark-skinned (or she's got dark skin).



He's got a crew-cut.



He's bald /bɔːld/ and has freckles.



He's got a beard and moustache /məs'tæʃ/ and has a chubby face.



He's got receding hair and a few wrinkles /rɪŋkəlz/.



He used to have black hair but now it's gone grey, almost white.

What sort of person would you find attractive? Blonde, fair, dark or ginger-haired / red-haired.

She has such beautiful auburn hair. /'əʊbən/ [red-brown]  
 Fair and dark can be used for hair, complexion or skin.

### B Height and build



a rather plump or stout man



a slim woman [positive]



a skinny person [rather negative]

an obese couple /əʊ'bɪ:s/ [negative, very fat]

Fat may sound impolite. Instead we often say a bit overweight. If someone is broad and solid, we can say they are stocky. A person with good muscles can be well-built or muscular. If someone is terribly thin and refuses to eat, they may be anorexic /ænə'reksɪk/.

### C General appearance

She's a very smart and elegant woman, always well-dressed; her husband is quite the opposite, very scruffy and untidy-looking / messy-looking.

He's very good-looking, but his friend's rather unattractive.

Do you think beautiful women are always attracted to handsome men? I don't. I think personality matters most.

First impressions are always important. [your first reaction to someone]



The suffix **-ish** is useful for describing people (see Unit 8). She's **tallish**. He has **brownish** hair. He must be **thirtyish**.

## Exercises

**37.1** Answer these remarks with the opposite description.

**EXAMPLE** A: I thought you said he was the short, chubby one.  
 B: No, no, no, not at all, *he's the tall, thin-faced one.*

- 1 A: Was that his brother, the dark-skinned, wavy-haired one?  
 B: No, completely the opposite, his brother's ...
- 2 A: She's always quite well-dressed, so I've heard.  
 B: What! Who told you that? Every time I see her, she's ...
- 3 A: So Charlene's that rather plump, fair-haired woman, is she?  
 B: No, you're looking at the wrong one. Charlene's ...
- 4 A: So, tell us about the new boss; good looking?  
 B: No, I'm afraid not; rather ...
- 5 A: I don't know why, but I expected the tour-guide to be middle-aged or elderly.  
 B: No, apparently she's only ...

**37.2** Write one sentence to describe each of these people, giving information about their hair and face, their height and build and general appearance.

- 1 you yourself      3 a neighbour
- 2 your best friend      4 your ideal of a handsome man / a beautiful woman

Now, in the same way, describe somebody very famous, give some extra clues about them, e.g. He's/She's a *pop star/politician*. Can someone else guess who you are describing?

**37.3** From these jumbled words, find combinations for describing people, as in the example. Not all of the words are on the left-hand page. Some of the combinations are hyphenated. Use a dictionary if necessary. You can use the words more than once.



**EXAMPLE** *good-looking*

looking	round	mixed	over	well	dressed	legged
haired	complexion	good	long	race	weight	
middle	stocky	faced	red	aged	build	tanned

**37.4** **WANTED! MISSING!** Complete the gaps in these police posters.

**WANTED FOR MURDER**



Ian Prowse  
 White, height 6ft,  
 .....-faced,  
 ..... hair,  
 ..... skin

**Wanted for Armed Robbery**



Sandra King  
 White, height 5ft 4,  
 ..... hair,  
 ..... build,  
 .....-faced

**Missing**



Louise Fox  
 age 7,  
 Asian appearance  
 .....  
 ..... hair.

**Wanted dead or alive**



Jack 'Dagger'  
 Flagstone 6ft  
 ..... , with  
 ..... and .....;  
 ..... build.

**Follow-up:** Make a collection of descriptions of people from newspapers and magazines. Court/crime reports, celebrity and gossip pages of magazines, and the personal columns where people are seeking partners are good places to start.